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A
SERMON

Preached before the
Incorporated SOCIETY

FOR THE
*Propagation of the Gospel in
Foreign Parts;*

AT THEIR
ANNIVERSARY MEETING
IN THE
Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow;

On Friday the 16th of February, 1727.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,
(Meynolds)
RICHARD, Lord Bishop of Lincoln.

L O N D O N, 
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February 16. 1727.

At the Anniversary Meeting of the Society
for the Propagation of the Gospel in
Foreign Parts.

ORdered, That the Thanks of the
SOCIETY be given to the Right
Reverend the Lord Bishop of
Lincoln, for his Sermon Preached this
Day before the SOCIETY; And that his
Lordship be desired to Print the same.

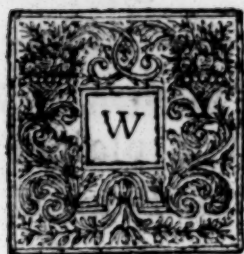


David Humphreys,
Secretary.



I *Ep. John iii. 8.*

--- *That he might destroy the
Works of the Devil.*



ERE the Civil Powers, in any Place, to commit to chosen Men the Revival or Enforcement of ancient Laws, or Charters, granted for the Benefit of distant Colonies, but either not sufficiently promulged, or, since the Promulgation, fallen under Disfuetude or Oblivion; Reason would direct the Persons thus intrusted, first of all to trace out the Original Design and Occasion of the ancient Grants, that so having the Original Design, with the present State of Things laid together before them, they might, under such a

compleat View of their Work, take proper Measures for the Prosecution of it.

So we, Men, Brethren and Fathers, commissioned and intrusted, as we are, for enlarging the Kingdom of Christ, for conveying the glad Tidings of his Grace, or the Means and Terms of his Salvation, to Nations who either never had, or now at least have lost the Knowledge of them, can take no better Method then to carry back our Thoughts to the first Publication of the Gospel-Revelation, to the Original Design and Occasion of our Saviour's manifesting himself and his Religion to the World.

And this is no where set out in plainer Words than these, in which the Beloved Apostle hath here exprest it; — *For this Purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil.*

Permit me then, from this Text, to present to your Consideration,

I. The Purpose, Occasion, and Design of our Saviour's Manifestation to the World; *To destroy the Works of the Devil.*

II. The

II. The wonderful Success with which our Saviour and his Apostles carried on this Design ; with the Causes of that Success.

III. The Letts or Impediments which checkt the Progress of this Design in succeeding Ages.

IV. The Accommodation of these Observations to the present Occasion.

I. The first Thing to be consider'd, is, the Purpose and Design of our Saviour's Manifestation, here said to be, — *To destroy the Works of the Devil.*

As all the Appearances in Nature, and all Reasonings from them, tending to the Manifestation of the true God, must necessarily represent him perfectly wise and good, and righteous in all his Ways ; so whoever considers him as clothed with these Perfections, must needs conclude that this all-wise and gracious Being having made such a Creature as Man, would not turn him a Drift without Card or Compass, but would by his own Goodness be disposed to manifest himself, and his Will to him, as his Port and Point, and give him such Rules as might,
by

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by their Observance, steer him to that Countrey, to that Heaven and Happiness for which he was fitted and designed.

And that same Goodness, which first disposed the Almighty to reveal himself to Man, and give him Rules of Faith and Conduct, must in succeeding Ages, as the Light and Strength of the first Communications decreas'd, with equal Energy dispose him to repeat and inculcate the needful Revelation.

And thus in Fact, in this rational and gracious Way, hath the Goodness of God proceeded with Mankind: The first Revelations, with the History of the first Man's Fall, had a short and sure Conveyance to great Numbers of his Descendants; and, under the Reverence of his Paternal Authority, could not but have, for the first Ages, a powerful Influence on their Minds.

But as remoter Generations came on, with Variety of Dispositions for the Wiles of Satan to work upon, the Tempter so prevail'd, that some time before the Flood, all Flesh had corrupted themselves, and filled the Earth with Violence.

Yet

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Yet under this high Provocation, did not God presently give them over for lost, but interposed many gracious Providences for their Recovery, and sent many Prophetic Warnings, before he let out the Fountains of the Deep upon them.

After the Deluge, and the Replenishment of the Earth by the Sons of *Noah*, when his degenerate Race [forgetting not only the old History of God's Power and Providence in the Creation and Government of the Antidiluvian World, but also his new Revelations to their Fathers] fell again into the Snares of the Devil, into the grossest Impurities, into the vilest Idolatries, even to worship the lowest Parts of the Creation, four-footed Beasts and creeping Things, instead of their great and glorious Creator, God did not so resent this second Revolt, as utterly to abandon the Apostates; his Goodness would not suffer him absolutely to cast them off as incurable, or leave them in that sad State of Darkeness and Depravity, into which the Devil and their own Lusts had betray'd them; but according to his Compassions so order'd the OEconomy of his succeeding Providences,

dences, that no Part of Mankind should totally lose Sight of their Maker, no Colony of them be without Opportunities of Learning those Laws and Revelations, which he from Time to Time had given them, as the Rule of their Faith and Obedience.

If we look back to God's frequent Communications with the Families that adhered to his Worship, and then consider their ambulatory Lives, their Missions or Travels to propagate the Revelations in distant Places: If we more particularly survey the Natural or Political State of the Sons of *Israel*; the Situation of their Country, or the Frame of their moral Constitution, with the many careful Provisions therein, for the Reception and Instruction of Strangers and Profelytes, we shall plainly see the grand Design of preserving and propagating the Knowledge and Worship of the true God, to have been principally regarded in every considerable Circumstance of their Establishment.

Deut.
xxxii. 8. *When the most High divided to the Nations their Inheritance, when he separated the Sons of Adam, he set the Bounds of*

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of the People according to the Number of the Sons of Israel. He set the Bounds of their Habitation, that they should seek the Lord, *if haply they might feel after him, and find him, as being not far from every one of them:* The Holy Nation was to be as so much Leaven commodiously hid as it were in the Mass of the World, to diffuse and extend the Knowledge of God on every Side; by their Conquests or their Captivities, by their Inroads or their Dispersions, or by their more friendly Intercourses for Alliance and Commerce, right Notices of God and Religion were to be scatter'd in every Field, that the holy Seed, in its Season, growing up into a Tree, *the Fowls of the Air*, all Nations might partake of its Fruit and Shelter.

Nevertheless, as God multiplied his Mercies, so did Mankind their Perverseness and Impieties: They hardened their Hearts, and blinded their Eyes, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand; and upon their Progress in Impiety, the old Seducer rais'd his Dominion to such an insolent Highth, that they who disdain'd to

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continue Servants to the great God, *whose Service was perfect Freedom*, had the just Horror to behold themselves betray'd into the most dismal Bondage; inflav'd to the Devil and their own Lusts, the most cruel and tyrannous Masters. To see their Estates consumed in vain Superstitions! Their Children made to pass through the Fire to *Moloch*! yea, their very Skin not left them! Their whole Nature, Body and Soul, insulted, tormented, corrupted, by the Impostures and Impurities, the lying Oracles and filthy Mysteries of the Gods they had chosen.

For although from *Noah* to *Moses*, and from *Moses* to Christ, God had at sundry Times, and after diverse Manners, spoken by his Prophets to his People, and by them again, in the Ways of his Providence, to the Nations round them: Yet were they for the more Part so darkned in their Understandings, as not to comprehend the Truth revealed, or so corrupt in Will, as obstinately to detain it in Unrighteousness.

So that notwithstanding all the foregoing gracious Dispensations, the *whole*
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Creation yet groaned under a most grievous Bondage, then become, as it sensibly was, too heavy for them to bear.

In this sad State, when the Power and Insolence of Satan were grown to the Highth, and Sin and Corruption had sunk Mankind to the lowest Mark of Misery, in this sad State did God vouchsafe to speak unto them by his Son: Then was he sent into the World *to destroy Sin*, here said to be the *Work of the Devil*, (as he was the first Author, and continues the Abettor of it) to throw down his Altars, to detect his Impostures; and put an End to his Usurpations; to proclaim Liberty to his Captives, to loose them from their double Chain, the Guilt and Dominion of Sin; to rectify those false Notions which had corrupted them; to reclaim them from those Vices which had inflaved them; to teach them the Government of their Passions, that Moderation and Meekness, which alone can speak Peace to their Souls; in a Word, to propound to them the best Religion, and the best Example too; the most perfect Law, and the most powerful Motives to observe it; to give them right Notions

of God, right Rules of Worship, and right wise Directions for advancing from one Degree of Perfection to another, till they arrived at that Consummation in Bliss, which God hath prepared for those, that have first prepared themselves for the heavenly Mansions.

Barely to have purchased Pardon for Sin, whilst the Sinners remain'd impenitent and unreform'd, would have left the Happiness of the Creature imperfect and uncompleted: Though the Evil of Punishment had been done away, the Evil of sinful Habits remaining, must have made the Subject incapable of Happiness; but to save Men, as Christ came to save them, from their Sins, from the Power and Dominion of their Passions, was to be a Saviour indeed! was to work the Work of God, and worthy of the Son of God! worthy to be, as it is here said to be, the Design of his Coming, the Purpose for which he was manifested to the World.

II. This Purpose, this Way and Method of Salvation did the Apostles undertake to preach and propagate; as
we

we come now, in the second Place, to show.

They began with exhorting Men to *turn from their Vanities*, from their vain Superstitions, or Worship of lifeless Idols, *to the living God*; to the Service of the infinitely wise, and good, and powerful God, who *made all Nations* of Men, and constantly *did Good to all*.

They went on with *preaching that Men should repent*, and cleanse themselves from all *Filthiness and Superfluity of Naughtiness*, into which their former Ignorance had betray'd them; declaring all along, that it had been better for Men *never to have known the Way of Righteousness*, than after the *Knowledge of it*, to return to their former *Defilements*, since the Gospel was so manifestly design'd for their Instruction in Purity, as well as in Faith and Piety.

And so excellently well adapted were the Institutes of the Gospel Religion to compass the Reformation which the first Publishers of it proposed to introduce, that they, and their immediate Successors, could boldly maintain, in the Face of all Adversaries, that it had actually wrought
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*Orig. &
Cels. 1. 1.
p. 21.*

and would, in its Progress, work the Alteration proposed in all Places where it was or should be duly receiv'd.

*Lactan.
1. 3 p. 24.*

This was the Nature and Power of that Gospel which they preach'd; and with such Industry and Success did they preach it, that, as the great Historian of the first Centuries assures us, it was, in a very short Time, preach'd in all the World, *Barbarians* as well as *Greeks* receiving it, *πατέροις ἡρακλήεσσιν ἢ πατέρω φωνῇ*, in their Country Style, and in their Native Tongue.

*Euseb.
1. 3. p. 24.*

So punctually did they fulfil That to which the Prophet *David* seems to have alluded in his magnificent Description of God's preaching to the World by the Compass and Rapidity of the heavenly Motions; where, upon the Course of the Sun in particular, he saith, *That his going forth is from one End of the Heavens, and his Circuit unto the Ends thereof*; and of all together he observes, that *their Sound is gone out into all Lands, and their Words unto the Ends of the World*. By which Allegory, the least that can be intended with Reference to the Antitype, our Sun of Righteousness, is,

Psal. xix.

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is, that his Gospel should be preach'd in all the World, *i. e.* in such and so many Places at least, as should ascertain the Conveyance to all the rest, and so amount to an universal Publication, — *That nothing should be hid from the Heat thereof.*

This swift Progress of the Gospel through the Universe, thus foretold, and thus fulfilled, was, under God's All-disposing Providence, chiefly owing to these two Things. 1. The intrinsic Excellence of the Gospel Religion. And 2. The excellent Qualifications of the First Propagators.

1. Such, in the First Place, was the intrinsic Excellence of the Gospel Religion; so wise and holy all its Laws, so operative and powerful its Helps and Motives; so admirably well fitted to reform and refine Men's Manners; to advance them to the highest Degrees of Perfection attainable here, and to the Hopes of consummate Happiness hereafter, as could not but recommend it to the Acceptance of Mankind in all Places, as the most welcome Tidings, as the most rational and beneficial Institution, that
had

had ever been published in the World.

2. And this Religion, in it self thus worthy of all Acceptation, was further recommended from without, and forwarded in its Progress, by the excellent Qualifications of the first Propagators.

1. One visible Help to this was, their close Adherence to the Cause in Hand: The Gospel of Christ was that which was intrusted to them; and that Gospel they preach'd. No Schemes or Inventions of Men! No Concern, much less any Contention, for the Prerogative of *Jerusalem*, or the Pre-eminence of *Antioch*! They protested every where against knowing, much more against preaching, any Thing but *Christ crucified, and the Power of his Resurrection*, the Power of that great Miracle, to bring Men to *Repentance towards God, and Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*.

2. Another Thing greatly forwarding this Work in their Hands, was, the disinterested Zeal, and indefatigable Industry, under which, through all Sorts of Hazards and Hardships, by Sea and by Land, in Cities, in Deserts, in Hunger and Thirst, and Nakedness, and Want of
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all Things, they on all Hands prest it on ; — *Counting not their Lives dear, so that they might fulfil their Ministry, as they had undertaken to fulfil it ; which was, to teach all Nations, and preach the Gospel to every Creature.*

And this they did accordingly, unassisted by Force, or Arts of any Kind, by meer dint of honest Labour and Travel, gaining upon the World as they went on, by the Holiness of their Lives, and the Simplicity of their Address, undesigned, and unsuspected of any selfish or sinister Views ! coveting no Man's Silver or Gold ; making no Attempts on the Persons or Privileges, on the Rights or Properties of the Catechumens ! Not as *καπηλεύοντες τον λογον*, not as *bucksterring out the Gospel* for Power, or Profit, or Praise ; but renouncing all, and giving up all, and themselves too, for the Sake of Christ and his Gospel.

Lastly, That which enlivened these Qualifications, that which animated their Industry, their Zeal, and uniform Adherence to this Cause, was, the Strength of their Faith. By this, *every Valley before them was exalted, and every Hill brought low ;*

by this they removed Mountains, all those Mountains of Opposition cast in their Way by the Lusts and Passions, the Prejudices and Prepossessions of the World; *and preferred the Reproach of Christ, to all the Riches and Pleasures that Courts or Kingdoms could offer.*

Their full Assurance of *another and better City*, made them more than Conquerors over every Thing that could encounter them in their Way to it, as became the Followers of that great Captain of this Gospel Salvation, who, *for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, and despised the Shame.*

Thus they subdued Provinces, and captivated all Ranks and Conditions of Men to the Obedience of Christ. *This was the Victory by which they overcame the World, even their Faith! —*

And let the Sceptic and the Scoffer cast forth as much Scorn and Contempt on the Preachers of the Gospel, as their prophane Hearts can throw out: The Founders of Churches will ever be considered as greater Benefactors to Mankind, than the Overturners of Cities; and the Monuments of their Piety will hold

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hold up their Names in lasting and honourable Remembrance, when the Palaces of the Prophane, with the *Names of the Wicked, shall rot.*

Truly glorious was the Course of Religion in those Days! But long it continued not in that Course! The same Holy Gospel, which in the first Ages, under innumerable Difficulties and Oppositions, made a triumphant Progress, subdued the World, and possessed the Throne of the Empire, was, in the Ages next following this great Success, seen to lose Ground; and lost it so fast, that the Footsteps of it are now scarce visible in the vast Regions of the *East* and *West Indies*, where yet our modern Missionaries find ground for Conjecture that some Evangelists must have been before them.

And as for those once flourishing Churches of *Asia*, which were the first Fruits of the Gospel, and had the Honour to be first enlightened, and set up as Lights to the rest of the World, they are now as so many Monuments of the Retrogradation of the Gospel, overspread with Ignorance, Barbarism, and Infidelity.

To what are we to ascribe this unhappy Alteration? The Gospel is not changed, nor is God subject to any Variableness, or Colour of Changing! But Yesterday and to Day the same; good to all, and willing that all should come to the Knowledge of his Truth and be saved.

Shall we then say, — That the Gospel hath been withdrawn from some by way of judicial Punishment for their prophane Neglect of it? Or that the further Preaching of it hath been of meer Kindness deferr'd, on God's Foresight of their being disposed not to receive, but to reject it, to the Increase of their Condemnation? Or hath the Wisdom of God put off the full Call of the Gentiles, to *that Fulness of Time*, in which the Call will redound more to the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind?

These are all secret Things of the Lord, and it cannot be warrantable for Men to lay any great Strefs on such Conjectures as they can make about 'em: But there are two Things, which are plain and unquestionable Remora's, which have been mentioned, and should continue to be mentioned as such, till the

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Reproach of them be in some Sort removed from amongst us.

One of these is, That the Gospel is not now preached and propounded in that Purity and Simplicity, in which it was propounded and preached in the first Ages. For tho' by God's Goodness we have the precious Depositum of his revealed Will, *that Form of sound Words*, safely handed down to us in sacred Writ, yet is the Beauty of this Form frequently so disfigured by false Glosses, and the Soundness of it so corrupted with Mixtures of secular Divinity, by the Workings of worldly Wisdom, that the Word preached prevails not now as it did in former Ages; but raises Mens Jealousies, many Times, instead of laying their Passions, and tends to disgust rather than to gain them; as the Preaching of *Austin* the Monk is known to have succeeded with such of our Country-men, in his Time, as apprehended the main of his Business to be, not so much for enlarging the Kingdom of Christ, as for extending the Bounds of his Master *Gregory's* Government, and advancing the Power and Influence of his Pontificate.

2. Another

2. Another visible Stop or Hindrance to the Progress of Christianity, in these latter Ages, hath arisen from hence, That the modern Missionaries have not been seconded and assisted by the Lives and Labours of their People, as the first Preachers were by the first Fruits of their Gospel. Those first Fruits consider'd themselves as being unto Jew and Gentile, what the Jews aforetime had been to the Nations round them, that sacred *Leaven*, prepared by the Wisdom of God, for diffusing and communicating his Methods of Salvation on every Side; hence they became, as it were, so many auxiliary Apostles and Evangelists for carrying on the great Work: Hence many of these are found to have left *Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and all that they had*, to follow Christ and his Gospel; and of those that thought fit to abide in their worldly Callings, wherever those Callings detain'd or invited them, — By Sea, or by Land, in their own, or in Foreign Countries, they made it their first and principal Concern to instruct the ignorant in the Faith of Christ; and by a disinterested,

terested, harmless, and blameless Conversation, to commend themselves and their Religion to the World; *to every Man's Conscience in the Sight of God.*

This, it is to be fear'd, is more than can be said for the main Body of Christians in this Age. The *Romish* Writers frankly own, that Their People have, many of them, by their insatiable Greediness, and other Enormities, practised in the Sight of the Unconverted, given the Heathen ground to disesteem and blaspheme the Christian Religion, as allowing its Professors in the Practice of such sordid and filthy Things, as were contrary to the Dictates of Reason, and much below the Dignity of humane Nature.

And it were much to be wish'd, that the Reproach of thi Kind of Hindrance might rest with Those Traders in Religion, from whom it confessedly took its Rise: But as *St. Paul* complains concerning the Jews in his Time, that *all were not Israel*, who were of *Israel*; so it is much to be feared, that some from among our selves have follow'd the Error of our Neighbours, in making

a Gain of Godliness; outwardly professing a Zeal for the Gospel, but inwardly loving, and really aiming at nothing but the World, and the Things of the World.

An infinite Scandal this! and infinite must be the Prejudices hereby rais'd in the Minds of natural Men against the Gospel Revelations, to see the Disciples of those heavenly Doctrines still entertaining such earthly Views, and *labouring for the Meat that perisheth*, with such superlative Ardour, as may induce a just Suspicion, that however they pretend to Faith in another Life, and to have set *their Affections on Things above*, it is on Things below, and in this Life only, that they have truly terminated all their Hopes.

Thus having shown how uniformly the divine Wisdom had in every Age provided not to leave the Godhead without Witness, nor Mankind without Means of learning what Religion and Obedience he expected from them: How it had pleased God, at sundry Times, after diverse Manners and Degrees of
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Revelation, to clear up this Testimony, as it became obscured by Neglect or Corruption: And how he determined to make, and in the Fulness of Time did make, once for all, a full Discovery of himself, by manifesting to the World the Brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person. — Having also shown that the Design of this full and ultimate Manifestation was to make an universal Conquest over Sin and Satan, to dispel those Mists of Ignorance, to break those Bands of Corruption, into which the Wiles of the Devil, and the Wickedness of Men's own Hearts, had betray'd them: And lastly, that this glorious Design had been carried on with great Success in the first Ages, but in Times following had lost Ground, or at best had gain'd none.

You will now be pleased to suffer one Word of Exhortation, suited to the Doctrine of the Text, and the Occasion of this solemn Assembly.

Were this, at any Time, a Place for Schemes, the present Speaker from hence would not be forward to dictate in that

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Way, to a Society so well instructed. More agreeable to him and his Office it must surely be, to remind you of what hath been by infinite Wisdom it self laid down as a standing Rule of Direction in this Case, "*The Harvest truly is great, but the Labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest*" (and in Co-operation with your Prayers, use your best Endeavour, imploy your Gifts and your Talents) "*to send forth Labourers into the Harvest.*"

Here is indeed a plenteous Harvest, and Work for more than are at present imploy'd therein. Yet it is to be remembered, that the Progress of the Work will depend on the *Qualifications*, rather than on the *Number* of the Workmen. And if the Apostles, who were not more than twelve, undertook to preach, and did by themselves and their Converts effectually preach the Gospel, and thereby gather a great Flock in all Parts of the World: We are not to despair, but that a Mission of faithful Men, tho' not very numerous, may, in this Age, when they have fewer Difficulties to encounter than the first Preachers had, by the
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Assistance of God's Grace, become sufficient to seek up the Remnant, those that have not yet been within the Fold, as well as those that have wander'd from it, and *bring them to the Bishop and Shepherd of their Souls.*

The meaning is, — That though the Harvest is great, and the Call for Labourers, according to humane Judgment, answerably great; yet as from the Nature of the Work we cannot but see that the Success of it must depend on the *Qualifications*, rather than on the *Numbers* of the Workmen; The Observation furnishes a standing Argument for the Continuance of that pious Care, which hath by this Corporation been hitherto laudably imploy'd, in the Choice of fit Men for this Service. This State of the Case will keep up their watchful Care, to admit unto this Ministry, not every one whose Levities, or Necessities, may induce him to present himself; but such only as are well known to have subdued themselves, and to have acquired thereby the greater Fitness for subduing others to the Obedience of Christ: Such only as can give satisfactory

Assurances that they will not run after the Pleasures or Profits of the World, but will wait on their Ministry, and assiduously labour therein; *Preaching not themselves*, or any worldly Interest, neither their own, or other Men's Inventions, but the Gospel of Christ, pure and unmix'd; neither accommodated to the Superstitions of the Heathen, nor depraved by the false Glosses of corrupt Christians; not superstructed with this Sort of *Hay and Stubble*, but with *Silver and Gold*, and the more precious Means of an Holy and Heavenly Conversation.

A Mission thus prepared, and thus disposed, though not many in Number, would, it is to be hoped, even in the present State of Things, with the ordinary Aids still vouchsafed, make a glorious Progress amongst the unconverted; but the Difficulty is, how to provide effectually that none but such as are thus duly prepared, shall be let in to this Work; since a few unfaithful Men, a few Traders in Religion, *creeping in* as they may *unawares*, may raise more Disgust and Opposition to the Gospel, than a greater Number of honest Men may
be

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be able to remove ; the Difficulty therefore is, how to provide effectually against this Inconvenience !

Here then, upon Consideration of this Difficulty, and under a Sense of our Insufficiency to keep or set such a Guard at this Point as shall secure us against all Surprise or Surreption. We are brought again to call upon God, as we do in these our solemn Assemblies, for his Assistance ; To call upon *him* who alone knows, who only can dispose and govern the Hearts of Men, to prepare, and, under our Choice, send forth fit Labourers into this Harvest.

A blessed and glorious Harvest this ! or a Field of Blessings and Glory to such as shall duly labour therein. To such, as having first erected the Kingdom of Christ within themselves, shall labour faithfully to extend it as far and as wide as they can : To such as *at their Lord's Coming shall be found so doing* ; shall be *found employ'd*, by diligent Preaching, or operative Example, by personal Labours, or liberal Contributions, by pious Exhortations, or wise and useful Directions, according to their Stations, in Proportion

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to their Talents imployed, in helping forward or bringing in that glorious State of Christ's Church so long wrap'd up in Sacred Prophecy, *when the Mountain of the Lord's House, being established on the Top of Mountains, or the Kingdom of Christ exalted over all the Kingdoms of the Earth, all Nations shall flow unto it, shall acknowledge its paramount Power and Dominion.*

For the *Certainty* of this great Event, or that it shall in its Season assuredly have its Production, we have the Promise of God, whose Faithfulness cannot fail us. And for the *Time*, though we know not the Day and the Hour, yet as we must certainly know that the Conclusion of this great Work, the End of these Things, is drawing nearer and nearer upon us; so may we not from Prophetick Hints, and Scripture Computations, from the Dawnings of this Light, and from the Disclose of those Signs and Characters which were to be the Harbingers of this Glory, *from Kings appearing nursing Fathers to the Church, and Queens her nursing Mothers; and from God's advancing at this Juncture*
the

for Propagation of the Gospel, &c. 31

the Most Gracious of Princes to be the Defender of our Faith, and giving to the Gospel Religion, under his powerful Protection, the greatest Encouragement, Support, and Furtherance, that ever it was known to have since the Days of *Constantine*; May we not comfortably preface that the Kingdom of God is coming upon us, and his Providence now opening *a great Door and effectual* to such as are disposed to go in unto the Gentiles and help them?

Who then is a wise Man, and endued with Knowledge among you, let him, out of a good Conversation, shew forth his Fitness, and, with Singleness of Heart, express his Forwardness, to have his Lot in this Ministry; and, whether his Lot be for personal Labour, or pious Provision for those that shall labour therein, verily neither the Prophet, nor he that provides or sustains a Prophet, in the Name and Office of a Prophet, shall in any wise lose his Reward.

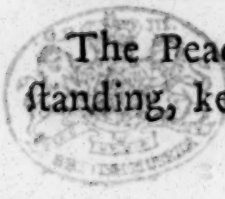
They that are wise, so wise as to chuse and wait upon this Ministry, so wise as to imploy their Talents for their Master's Service; for carrying on the Design of his

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his Gospel, for instructing the ignorant, and communicating the Knowledge of God, and his Terms of Salvation, to such as have not known them, shall, in this World, have the Honour of being enrolled in the noblest Order, Fellow-Labourers with the Apostles, Fellow-Citizens with the Saints; and in the World to come, be gloriously distinguish'd, shall shine as the Light, as the Brightness of the Firmament, and as Stars for ever and ever.

Of this Number that we may be, let us pray in the Words of the Collect for the Day,

O GOD, whose Blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the Works of the Devil, and make us the Sons of God, and Heirs of everlasting Life; Grant us, we beseech thee, that having this Hope, we may purifie our selves even as he is pure; that when he shall appear again with Power and great Glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious Kingdom, where with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth, ever one God, World without End. *Amen.*

The Peace of God which passeth all Understanding, keep your Hearts and Minds, &c.

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